

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) lauded the passage today of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Improvement Act of 2007, a bill that will provide critical resources to local police agencies across the country and enable departments to put an additional 50,000 officers on the streets nationwide. The bill's passage comes during National Police Week and on the day thousands of officers gathered outside the United States Capitol to commemorate the 26th Annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Day, which Rep. Hoyer attended.

"As our nation commemorates National Police Week this week and the 26th Annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Day today, let us honor the memory of our nation's fallen officers and thank those who carry on their legacy, serving in communities across this nation, keeping the peace, and protecting the American people," stated Rep. Hoyer. "What better way to pay homage to those who have lost their lives in the line of duty than by passing the COPS Improvements Act of 2007, a bill that provides critical resources to local law enforcement and agencies in order to better protect our communities and combat crime."

Created in 1994 to increase police presence on the streets, the enormously successful COPS program has helped local law enforcement agencies to hire 117,000 additional police officers and/or sheriff deputies nationwide, including 908 additional officers in Rep. Hoyer's 5th District of Maryland. Since 1994, \$59,570,462 in COPS hiring grants has been awarded to law enforcement agencies in Hoyer's district.

The COPS Improvements Act of 2007 calls for putting 50,000 additional police officers on the streets over the next six years by authorizing \$600 million a year for COPS hiring grants; \$350 million a year for COPS technology grants; and \$200 million a year for hiring community prosecutors.

"This program is essential for America's police departments to provide the necessary personnel to protect our communities. I can't underscore enough how important this legislation is and how far it will go in providing critical resources to police agencies nationwide," stated Chief Melvin High of Prince George's County Police Department, who spoke today at a press conference in Washington about the importance of COPS. [CLICK HERE FOR A PHOTO](#)

Since the establishment of the COPS hiring grant program, the nation has experienced a

significant drop in the crime rate, which several independent studies have linked to the increased police presence enabled by the program. According to a GAO study, between 1998 and 2000, COPS grants were responsible for reducing crimes by about 200,000 to 225,000 crimes – one third of which were violent.

The COPS grant program also provides a critical funding source for technology upgrades that allow for more officers to serve on the beat. These grants will allow police agencies to purchase things like lap top computers for patrol cars, crime mapping software, and interoperable communications equipment. Since 1994, \$18,836,656 in COPS technology grants have been awarded to police agencies in Hoyer's 5th District.

"The federal government is a committed partner in protecting Americans not only from the threat posed by international terrorism, but also from the dangers posed by domestic crime," stated Rep. Hoyer. "This critical legislation is key to equipping law enforcement with the resources they need to combat crime and keep our communities safe."

Unfortunately, over the last few years, the Republican-led Congress sharply reduced the funding for COPS hiring grants from more than \$1 billion a year in the late 1990s to \$198 million in 2003 and \$10 million in 2005. In 2006, the Congress completely eliminated the COPS hiring grants program. At the same time, crime rates began to rise. The COPS Improvement Act of 2007 reinvigorates COPS by authorizing \$1.15 billion for the enormously popular and successful COPS program over the next six years.

This legislation has been endorsed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National League of Cities.

For a full report on the COPS program in Maryland, [CLICK HERE](#) .

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